



Young European Biotech Network

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www.yebn.eu

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*Dear all,
Our Institutional Members are back from summer vacation! Pages 4–5 of this issue illustrate this very clearly, have a look at the many events that will take place during the next two months. Furthermore, YEBN offers **10 free entry vouchers** for a genomics workshop on **October 13th**. Check page 3 to know how you can get one.*

On page 4 the leader of the new Career Development project group asks for your ideas and wishes for the YEBN Career conference 2012. We are glad to see that this new

project group gained three new members via the newsletter article in the last issue, among them the new project group leader. Welcome on board!

Pages 2 and 3 give an insight into a previous YEBN event on careers and just below you will find an article on this year's Annual Meeting which will make your mouth water.

See you in Bologna!

Annika Hohendahl, Marie Müller

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YEBN Annual Meeting 2011 – Bridging Cultures in Scientific Careers

Young researchers express high interest in international cooperation, in the exchange of professional experiences and in creating Europe-wide projects. The ability to deal with personal and interpersonal relationships in such intercultural settings is crucial.

At this year's YEBN Annual Meeting (December 3rd–4th, Bologna), 35 young life scientists will gain a novel and broader perspective on intercultural relations. During the two day training, participants will learn to improve their competences on how to develop and successfully lead European youth projects. The trainers will apply non-formal learning methods and will include group work on case-studies, workshops on intercultural communication and an introduction to the Youth in Action Programme. "In YEBN, but also in daily work in the lab, I am surrounded by people from different countries with diverse backgrounds melting in a huge culture pot. It is not always easy to find a common line

straight away, often due to miscommunication", explains Annika Hohendahl (YEBN Vice Chairwoman who suggested the workshop). "I expect to gain a better understanding of cultural influences on communication processes, dealing with conflicts, the value systems and behavioral patterns. I hope the participants will take valuable experiences back home", trusts Annika. "We believe that the first step in increasing commitment of young people is to provide them with tools and techniques to cooperate in different environments and circumstances", adds Natalia Borkowska, YEBN Chairwoman.

Recently, the new YEBN Career Development project group was founded. The Annual Meeting will be the first face-to-face interaction of the members and an opportunity for exchange, feedback and open discussions about the Career Event to be organised in late spring 2012 (see page 4).

See you soon in Bologna!

Irina Epstein

Best of YEBN in New Biotechnology

Youth Conference on European Life Science Careers – creating a promising future

It is a privilege for me, an American studying in Europe, to write this article on the European Life Science Careers Conference. For three days the DECHEMA conference rooms in Frankfurt turned into a centre of education and promotion of vocational training. Between February 11th and 13th, 2009 the Young European Biotech Network hosted the first Youth Conference on European Life Science Careers to increase discussions about improving employment prospects in Europe. This dynamic event brought together 30 target-oriented life science students studying in 10 European countries with stakeholders from the European Commission, EFB, industry and academia for a dialogue focusing on hearing the voices of all participants through presentations, discussions and

small workgroups (Fig. 1). The conference was opened by representatives from the hosting institutional member, btS (Biotechnologische Studenteninitiative), and was then kicked off with a presentation of the preliminary results from the CiLS, Careers in Life Sciences survey. This survey was created with the intention of assessing the current demographics, attitudes, and concerns of new and experienced researchers. Talks were given by several plenary speakers who focused on key areas of intersection between academia, industry and government within the biotech community. One of these issues included international exchange and mobility of researchers. This session was led by Dr Sohail Luka, Research Directorate General, European Commission. His

presentation gave participants an idea about what the EU's efforts are in increasing the amount of spending in research and technology as a measure of its annual GDP spending. Currently the EU spends less than 2% of its GDP on research and development as a whole, whereas the target is 3% by 2010, which has now been amended to 2012. Considering the fact that both Japan and the US are spending more than 2% of their GDPs on research, this is giving them a competitive advantage now and for the foreseeable future. Europe will continue to lose ground if it does not change its investment strategy.

Many participants voiced their concerns about their European home countries losing their best scientists to the US or Japan. Are Europe's career structures simply too limited or too rigid to allow them to stay? This dialogue about physical movement or 'brain dump' between countries segued into a discussion on scientists interested in making the switch from academia to industry, or vice versa. Dr Reinhardt Bergauer from PP Pharma Planning stressed the importance of soft skills and other non-traditionally academic attributes scientists need to facilitate this successful career transition into industry. We then discussed some of the fundamental differences between industrial scientists and academics and identified several skill sets that we believed would be useful to help mitigate this issue. We would later return to this topic as it is something we as the YEBN



Figure 1. Conference Participants. The participants of the first Youth Conference on European Life Science Careers.

can do something about.

Further, Dr Michael Nettersheim of HighTech Gründerfonds introduced the group to some more of the practical aspects of technology transfer, start-up of companies and urgent issues all of Europe is facing. The point that hit home for this author was a slide stating that there is seed money for starting companies, and yet there is a lack of small and medium enterprises all over Europe.

We expanded on the issue of student mobility throughout their educational careers during Dr Andreani Odysseos' talk about the different international programmes for training students at all degree levels, such as the Erasmus, Marie Curie and Da Vinci programs. The major problem with these programmes is that they do not have enough applicants who are willing to use the resources that have been provided for them. Funding is not the issue; the problems are rather associated with the perceived loss of time, extension of the current degree, the inconsistencies in what is advertised in terms of language in which the course is taught, the availability of applicable courses and the length of time for the experience to be considered valuable. All these are possible reasons the group identified as problem areas for these programmes. Under the topic 'How to participate in FP7?' Dr Vera Siegmund from the European Research and Project Office discussed funding opportunities under the EU's Framework Programme 7 system. These presentations and discussions served as appetizer

for the afternoon working group sessions where the participants were divided into three groups covering each interface between industry, academia and government. During these sessions, the participants developed action plans on how to advance Europe's life sciences sector whilst also improving the competences of life science students. Key words identified during the morning sessions turned into solutions and proposals of what YEBN could possibly do to mitigate these problems. 'How to ensure you get the complementary skills that make you stand out of the crowd?' and 'What are the barriers to be tackled to attract the brightest minds to ERA from outside/inside?' are questions the young scientists recognized they can play a crucial role in challenging. Propositions were made to create new and support existing PhD programmes that integrate partnerships with industry as well as promote further partnerships or training with industry, from the Bachelor level onwards, thus making students aware of the importance of building complementary skills. This will be an area where YEBN will continue to engage in the future.

The participants are looking forward to a follow-up meeting envisioned after one year to measure the status of actions being taken and to advance these discussions and activities. Look out for our recommendations in the White Paper on European Life Science Careers!

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Irina Epstein

for her critical review of this manuscript and YEBN for the opportunity to participate in the European Life Science Careers Conference.

This work is the sole opinion of the author and does not represent the opinions or attitudes of YEBN or its constituents.

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Workshop "Genomics for Research and Molecular Diagnostics", October 13th, 2011 in Lodi, Italy

YEBN invites you to participate to the 6th European Workshop "Genomics for Research and Molecular Diagnostics", held on Thursday 13th of October at the Parco Tecnologico Padano (PTP) in Lodi, Italy. The workshop is divided into the three sessions *Genomes*, *Molecular Breeding* and *Bioinformatics*. Together with PTP, we are proud to provide **10 free admission vouchers for YEBN members**. To obtain one of the 10 vouchers, write an email to [eb\[at\]yebn.org](mailto:eb[at]yebn.org). The vouchers are distributed on a first-come first-served basis. Please note that vouchers for our Italian members can be provided directly via ANBI. If interested, please contact them for further details.

Registration fee: 100€ (without voucher)

Further info at <http://bit.ly/genomics-workshop>

Annika Hohendahl

Your ideas - Your conference - Your future - The YEBN Career event 2012

Congratulations, you got a degree or even PhD in life science, but what next? What career opportunities do you actually have? Which skills and experiences do you need to get your dream job? Which kinds of support are offered by the EU, national agencies, academia and industry?

To tackle these questions, YEBN is organising a Career conference in 2012. The conference will review what has happened since 2009, when a white paper was issued in Frankfurt by YEBN at the first Youth Conference on Careers in Life Sciences. In this white paper, ways to improve career opportunities for young scientists were proposed. But since then things have

changed, especially in the face of the economic crisis. We are therefore additionally asking for your opinions, both of Institutional Members as well as Individual Members: Which workshops do you need, which presentations would you want to go to, which seminars would you like to join at the YEBN Career conference 2012? Which issues would you like to tackle? Which topics matter in 2012 and beyond? Please send your comments and ideas to [robert.schwamborn\[at\]yebn.org](mailto:robert.schwamborn[at]yebn.org) and let us organise a career conference based on what you think is important.

Robert Schwamborn

Upcoming events in Life Sciences

ScieCon NRW 2011, October 26th, in Bochum, Germany

This year, the third ScieCon NRW hosted by the life sciences student association, btS, will take place. The fair offers undergraduate and postgraduate students the unique opportunity to connect with industry representatives. Hence, visitors can learn everything about their future career and can have their questions answered first hand. The fair is accompanied by lectures, case studies and much more. It is an event in which no questions will go unanswered. The event will take place in the Audimax at the Ruhr-University Bochum on 26th of October, starting from 10 am. Free entrance.

More info at www.ScieCon.info

Serhat Ceylen



Comm4Biotech, November 18th-19th, 2011 in Strasbourg, France

Get involved in science communication. Life sciences and technology in Europe bring innovative new products and therapies to consumers, farmers and patients. However, developments in the last decades have sparked public controversy around biotechnology. The Comm4Biotech congress, organised by btS and NGB, will promote and enhance communication between science and society addressing the future generation of scientists and decision makers.

Learn about, use and develop new communication tools in keynote lectures, workshops, challenge groups, poster presentations and plenary discussions and increase

your knowledge on how to present research, persuade others of your ideas, engage the public or communicate with journalists about science. More info at www.comm4biotech.eu

Marie Müller

XIII National Academic Seminar of Biotechnology Students, November 18th-20th, 2011 in Krakow, Poland

This seminar will be held simultaneously with the 3rd International Student Conference of Biotechnology and will attract passionate students of biotechnology and related fields, young scientists, researchers and academics to Krakow. The event, organised by the Academic Society of Biotechnology Students and the Scientific Association of Biotechnology Students "Mygen",



will be held from November 18th–20th, 2011. The seminars and poster sessions will cover diverse topics, from biochemistry and molecular biology to industrial biotechnology and bioinformatics.

Along with broadening the participants' knowledge, the conference will also provide possibilities to establish



cooperations between different scientific centres. More information at www.mygen.wbbib.uj.edu.pl/oassb

Ewa Biskup

ScieTalk 2011, November 23rd, in Münster, Germany

The ScieTalk is a free student congress organised by btS and was first established in Heidelberg in 2010.

Young and dedicated scientists can meet, exchange knowledge and discuss high-end topics. The participants are supported with seminars for rhetorical skills and presentation techniques.

The ScieTalk gives students of

life sciences the opportunity to present their research topics, their achievements and research groups to an interested audience of students and researchers from industry and university. International students are very welcome to participate! The talks and posters will be in English. Participation and entry are free. More information available at www.scietalk.bts-ev.de

Dominik von Tils



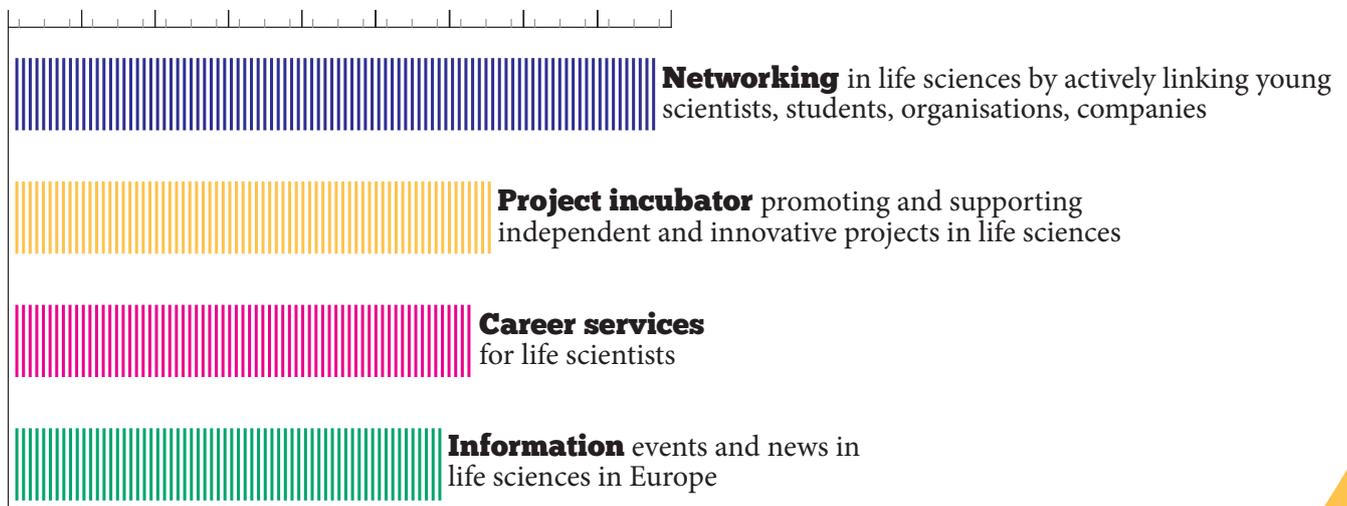
Our Network connects independent national organisations active in Europe in the areas of biotechnology and life sciences.

The organization members defined Institutional Members (IMs) are composed of young professionals, undergraduate and postgraduate students.

Individuals can also participate to YEBN activities as Individual Members (InMs) upon registering on our website.

>4000 young life scientists throughout Europe
14 Countries
Associated Section of European Federation of Biotechnology
1800 InM in 2002
2300 Members within 8 Organisations ongoing projects CiLS, iPhD
8 Representing **Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain, Switzerland** more at **yebn.eu**

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